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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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NASA SOURCE EVALUATION BOARD MANUAL

Effective Date: August 1, 1973

PREFACE

The acquisition of goods and services is among the most important activities that NASA performs and demands our best management efforts. The acquisition system we use must be such that individuals performing within it are challenged to high standards of performance because they know that their efforts contribute to and form part of the Government's decision-making process.

The source evaluation and selection process covered by this Manual exemplifies our efforts to emphasize the application of sound judgment to the problems of source evaluation. Also, the Manual emphasizes the responsibility which line management retains to assure that Source Evaluation Boards conduct their activities impartially and efficiently in ways which will effectively accomplish the source evaluation task.

The source evaluation process contemplates a thorough appraisal of offerors' proposals and consideration of other information bearing on the probability of quality performance, timely performance, realistic cost estimating and pricing, logic of proposed plan of execution, and responsible, cost-conscious management. This Manual provides general and specific guidance to Source Evaluation Boards in the evaluation of competing companies and their proposals in negotiated procurements. While it is intended primarily for use by NASA people involved in source evaluation and selection, it is at the same time available to the public so that NASA's policies and procedures in these important processes may be made known to and understood by all concerned.

The provisions of this Manual are applicable to all elements of NASA and are effective on the effective date of this Manual except for those SEB activities already begun where the process is too far along to permit their application.

NPC 402 is hereby cancelled.

DISTRIBUTION:
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James C. Fletcher
Administrator, NASA

NASA SOURCE EVALUATION BOARD MANUAL

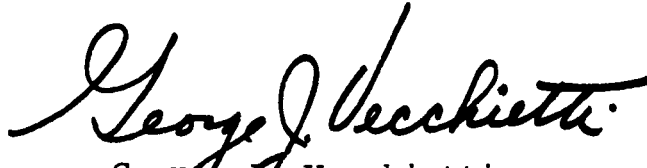
FOREWORD

1. This Manual establishes procedures for the conduct of NASA Source Evaluation Board activities. Its intention is to encourage the exercise of judgment in the many important aspects where it is essential, and to prescribe set process where experience has shown it to be required. Users are expected to apply common sense in determining where appropriate variations and adaptations are necessary in individual situations, provided that these do not constitute a departure from basic concepts and intent. Advance approval of substantive variations and adaptations will be secured from the Director of Procurement.
2. The Director of Procurement is responsible for keeping the Manual in a current status. He will have obtained the approval of the Associate Administrator for Organization and Management on any revision of a policy nature or which significantly changes procedural or other aspects. The Manual is not to be rewritten, in whole or in part, or issued in any other form. When any of its provisions require revision, the revision will be issued by the Director of Procurement.
3. In the event of inconsistency between the provisions of this Manual and other NASA directives, regulations, management issuances, etc., the provisions of this Manual govern insofar as SEB operations are concerned.
4. The Manual is organized so as to provide substantive and procedural guidance. In order to permit timely revisions to be made without resort to a multiplicity of separate issuances, or even total revision, the Manual is in hole-punched looseleaf form for use in binders. Bulk quantities of the basic Manual and future changes will be issued to each NASA Installation issuance control point for internal distribution. Each Installation is responsible for maintaining internal records as necessary for distribution of changes.
5. Rather than paraphrase or repeat, the Manual incorporates by reference other NASA directives, regulations, management issuances, etc., that govern or bear on the particular subject matter at hand.
6. The provisions of this Manual shall be used in the following situations involving competitively negotiated procurements, except for Architect-Engineer services:

- a. When the estimated cost of the contract, together with the estimated cost of ensuing later phases or other follow-on procurement for the project, is expected to equal or exceed the dollar values established under the Master Buy Plan Procedure (see PRD 72-4 dated March 23, 1972), or corresponding instructions in effect from time to time.
 - b. Any other competitively negotiated procurement which a Source Selection Official determines shall be evaluated pursuant to the provisions of this Manual.
7. Source Selection Officials for competitively negotiated procurements subject to the provisions of this Manual shall be the officials designated below, with the concurrence of such other senior officials as they may designate:
- a. Administrator of NASA: For those procurements determined pursuant to the Master Buy Plan Procedure to require selection by him.
 - b. Cognizant Field Installation Director: For those procurements made by his installation which are subject to the Master Buy Plan Procedure, but which have been determined not to require selection by the Administrator.
 - c. Headquarters Program Associate Administrator or Assistant Administrator: For those Headquarters procurements under his cognizance which are subject to the Master Buy Plan Procedure, but which have been determined not to require selection by the Administrator.
8. Announcement of the Source Selection Official's decision is to be made to the winning and losing offerors, the general public, and NASA personnel. When the Administrator is the Source Selection Official, the NASA Executive Officer is responsible for having the announcements made in accordance with applicable procedures; in other instances the Source Selection Official shall designate the responsible official.
9. This Manual supersedes the following, which is also hereby rescinded:

NMI 5103.3, dated September 23, 1966

10. In accordance with NASA's implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (NMI 1382.2, 14 CFR Part 1206), this publication will be made available to other Government agencies, contractors, and the public in general only through sale of the document by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.



George J. Vecchietti
Director of Procurement

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CHAPTER 1: KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEB PROCESS

100 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the role of key participants in the process by which sources are solicited, evaluated and selected for major negotiated procurements. These participants include cognizant line and staff management, the Source Evaluation Board and the Source Selection Official.

101 COGNIZANT LINE AND STAFF MANAGEMENT

1. The specific major procurement actions entering the SEB system are the product of decisions reached by line management in the processes employed to justify and gain approval for the project or other activity generating the procurement, and the SEB system should work in harmony with the needs and objectives of that activity. (See NMI 7121.1B and NHB 7121.4 covering the planning and approval of projects, and in particular the relation between the individual, procurement and the broader agency effort of which it forms a part.) Once the SEB system is entered, a set of procedures is employed to serve the following ends:

- a. To ensure selection of the source most advantageous to the government, cost, mission suitability, and other factors considered.
- b. To ensure fairness, impartiality, and freedom from outside influence.
- c. To protect the confidential and proprietary information contained in proposals.

It is the obligation of Agency line management to see to it that these objectives can be met by ensuring that the work of the SEB is adequately manned and efficiently performed; that Agency mission objectives set for the procurement are being properly pursued; and that an appropriate environment exists in which evaluation and selection activities can take place.

2. Line management will particularly:

- a. Approve SEB staffing, with emphasis on personnel qualifications and priority of assignments.

- b. Approve evaluation factors.
 - c. Approve the Request for Proposal (RFP).
 - d. Concur in the sources to be solicited.
 - e. Ensure that the oral presentation of SEB Reports presented at a higher level accurately and meaningfully presents the results of the Board's evaluation.
 - f. Advise the Source Selection Official at the conclusion of the presentation of the Board Report as to their views concerning the Board's findings.
3. Cognizant line and staff management will particularly:
- a. Ensure that SEB's are provided with all current NASA policies and procedures relevant to their operations.
 - b. Ensure that the RFP is complete, clear, and consistent with Agency objectives and with the need of the activity requiring the procurement; that the ground rules for evaluation and selection are clearly set forth; and that the RFP is not burdened with requests for data not important to source selection.
 - c. Ensure that proper procedures are employed, including those to prevent disclosure of information concerning proposals during competitive phases of the procurement process. The establishment at the Field Installation of an SEB advisory group or an individual to assist in this function is advised.
4. For purposes of this Manual, in cases where the Administrator is the Source Selection Official, "cognizant line management" includes:
- a. The Program Associate Administrator and his Deputies.
 - b. The Field Installation Director and his Deputies.
5. In cases where the Administrator is the Source Selection Official, "cognizant staff management" includes:
- a. The NASA Director of Procurement.
 - b. The Field Installation principal official-in-charge of administration.
 - c. The Field Installation chief counsel.
 - d. The Field Installation chief of procurement.

6. When the Administrator is the Source Selection Official, cognizant line management, the Associate Administrator for Organization and Management, his Deputy, the NASA General Counsel or his designee, the Assistant Administrator for Industry Affairs and Technology Utilization, and the Director of Procurement will also advise the Source Selection Official at the conclusion of the presentation of the Board Report of their views concerning the Board's findings. Cognizant management is encouraged to seek the advice of the Associate Administrator for Organization and Management, his Deputy, the NASA General Counsel, the Director of Procurement, or any other responsible Headquarters official, on any particular SEB-level procurement problem where it is deemed their participation will be helpful in carrying out the activities set forth in this Chapter.

102 THE SOURCE EVALUATION BOARD

1. The solicitation, receipt, and evaluation of proposals are carried out by a Source Evaluation Board as provided in this Manual. It is important the the Board's processes of evaluation be the Board's alone, uninfluenced by outsiders, either within NASA or without. The Board, equipped with special status and safeguarding procedures, is staffed with qualified people competent to identify the merits and demerits of the various proposals. The Source Evaluation Board is to assist the Source Selection Official in his decision making. Its part is to see to it that there are produced for consideration by the Source Selection Official suitable expert analyses covering the factors likely to be pertinent to the source selection decision.
2. In particular, the Board will:
 - a. Evaluate the various features of the proposals that, together, determine how well each proposer might fulfill mission suitability requirements; and to combine these judgments into an integrated assessment of relative probable performance. It is appropriate that a system of scoring be used for evaluation in the case of those proposal elements, or criteria, which pertain to mission suitability. A scoring system has value when the criteria selected permit qualitative distinctions among offerors and the weight assigned to each criterion reflects its relative importance in the overall evaluation of Mission Suitability. A scoring system,

once devised, must be impartially applied by the Board to each proposal in competition.

- b. Study and analyze the proposed costs and elements thereof to form an opinion as to their validity, and advise the Source Selection Official what, in the Board's view, for each of the proposals being considered, it will probably actually cost to do the work required.
- c. Advise the Source Selection Official as to any other factors that are pertinent to the selection, in the Board's view, and present appropriate analyses thereof. The Board is not to make recommendations to the Source Selection Official; it reports findings. Nor is the Board to make trade-off judgments as among Mission Suitability, Cost, and Other Factors (this is not to be interpreted as precluding the use of costs in determining an offeror's understanding of the requirements of the RFP, or the validity of his approach to performing the work as discussed in 201).

103 SOURCE SELECTION OFFICIAL

Source selection is made by a senior Agency official specifically designated for that purpose. It is the Source Selection Official's task to judge which of the proposals would prove most advantageous to the Government, all things considered. He must, in the light of the Government's stated requirements, determine the relative quality and suitability of what is being offered by each proposer and the likelihood of its being delivered; and he must assess how much the Government would be likely to have to pay for each offering. In making his selection, he must consider all factors pertinent to the choice, and make the necessary trade-off judgments, as may be required, among the three categories of factors. Selection of the offeror or offerors for award, as well as decisions involving resource allocations and determinations of a general management nature, will be made by the Source Selection Official in the light of the SEB's report and after consultation with cognizant line and staff advisors.

CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION FACTORS AND CRITERIA

200 GENERAL

1. This chapter describes the factors involved in the evaluation of offerors and discusses the role and responsibility of the SEB in the evaluation process.
2. The Board's responsibility is to aid the Source Selection Official in his function of selecting the offeror who will perform the contract in the manner most advantageous to the Government.
3. In making this selection, the official considers all pertinent factors; and these fall logically into three major areas, namely, how well and adequately the various proposers can be expected to perform the proposed work, what it will probably actually cost the Government in each alternative case, and finally, any other considerations that are pertinent to the choice.
4. Getting the proposed work done properly is always important, and so is the forecast cost of it. The likely cost is not necessarily the proposer's estimates of costs; rather it is our assessment of what would likely ensue, in the actuality, in each case. Depending on circumstances, other factors may or may not be of prime importance.
5. In carrying out its responsibility, the Board will evaluate proposals with respect to three groups of factors:
 - a. Mission Suitability Factors. These indicate, for each offeror, the merit of the work or product to be delivered, including, as appropriate, both technical and management factors. Because they can be highly technical, are relatively numerous, and must be integrated in order to convey an overall evaluation of relative merit, Mission Suitability Factors are to be numerically weighted and scored.
 - b. Cost Factors. These indicate what each offeror's proposal will probably cost the Government if he wins. Proposed costs are analyzed to determine the probable "cost of doing business" and to identify and weigh features that could cause a given

proposal to cost more or less than others, and by what amount. Cost Factors are not scored because the weight to be accorded them can be judged by the Source Selection Official only after he has determined the relative merits of the proposals from a mission suitability standpoint and the significance of differences in this regard, and after he has adjudged the significance of Other Factors.

- c. Other Factors These factors are those other than the numerically scored Mission Suitability Factors and the Cost Factors. They include but are not limited to, such things as: company experience, past performance, and financial condition; labor relations considerations; and small business and minority enterprise preference considerations, and geographic distribution of subcontract arrangements. Other Factors are not to be numerically scored.

201 MISSION SUITABILITY FACTORS

1. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- a. The establishment of evaluation criteria and their weight requires the exercise of judgment on a case-by-case basis. However, compliance with the guidelines that follow should result in a reasonably consistent and uniform practice throughout the Agency in establishing such criteria. The criteria established for each procurement and set forth in the RFP will be applied to determine each offeror's comparative rating in mission suitability potential, including its understanding of the requirements, approach to the work, and the competence of personnel to be directly involved.
- b. There may be a great many varied and complex areas that bear on how well an offeror can be expected to produce a product or perform a service required by NASA. By carefully considering the mission to be accomplished through use of the product or services being procured, the Board should be able to identify, analyze, and score those discrete criteria which determine how well the product or service can be expected to meet the demands of the mission. If individual criteria and weights have been prudently determined, the summation or integration of all the scores of the various criteria should give a representative picture of the relative merit of each offeror from the standpoint of mission suitability.

- c. Emphasis should be on the identification of significant discriminators rather than a multitude of criteria which tend to average out when integrated. Too many criteria will prove as detrimental to the effective evaluation of a proposal as will too few. The Board must be in a position to evaluate significant discriminators among proposals, rather than many relatively unimportant differences which could result from overly numerous criteria. Clearly defining each evaluation criterion will help avoid overlap and redundancy in the criteria themselves.
- d. Some Mission Suitability Factors found by experience to be relevant to all procurements (except for Excellence of Proposed Design, which pertains only to hardware procurements) are:

(1) Understanding the Requirement

An offeror's understanding of the requirement depends in part on how well he comprehends what the work is and what data should be submitted. His proposal must be examined and analyzed to ascertain the extent to which he understands the total requirement set forth in the RFP.

Although costs as such are to be analyzed separately from Mission Suitability, they are of significant value in indicating an offeror's understanding of the resources, both human and material, required for performance of the contract. Accordingly, the Board, in its evaluation of Mission Suitability Factors pursuant to the established, weighted criteria, should make full use of the cost proposals to help determine the offeror's understanding of the requirements of the RFP, as well as to assess the validity of the offeror's approach to performing the work in accordance with the requirements. Cost realism or the lack thereof should enter into the SEB's assessment of the measure of understanding possessed by each offeror. Similarly, an offeror's justification for cost incurrence can give insight into his understanding of the work to be done.

(2) Management Plan

The management plan sets forth the offeror's

approach for efficiently managing the work as demonstrated by the proposed organization, the recognition of essential management functions, and the effective overall integration of these functions.

The Management Plan gives insight into the project organization proposed for the work, including the internal operations and lines of authority, together with external interfaces and relationships with the Government, major subcontractors, and associate contractors. The authority of the project manager and his relationship to the next higher echelon of management, and his command of company resources generally can be ascertained from the Management Plan. Likewise, the Management Plan usually reflects various schedules necessary for the logical and timely pursuit of the work, accompanied with a description of the offeror's work plan. The rationale for optimization of a management approach for a cost effective program would be presented here.

(3) Excellence of Proposed Design

Design of the product being bought is generally a major aspect of the competition. In order to arrive at an informed judgment, the Source Selection Official must have the Board's considered views on the merits of the competing designs--both against the stated requirement and against each other. Generally, the best design will be the one that promises to provide the required performance at a reasonable cost. In formulating the views regarding the relative merits of the designs proposed, the Board is expected to consider the costs of performing the work inherent in the differing designs. Evaluation of design shall extend to whatever subsystem level is appropriate.

(4) Key Personnel

Thorough evaluation of key personnel proposed by competitors in major procurements is one of the most vital aspects of Source Evaluation Board activity.

Experience demonstrates that the qualifications and performance of a few people--the top half-dozen or so directly involved managers--are extremely important to the successful accomplishment of a

contract. These people, for the purpose of evaluation, are defined as "Key Personnel." The SEB shall determine their number and identity in each case.

Written resumes play their part in the evaluation of key personnel, but they should be considered as baselines from which the real evaluation begins. Personal reference checks with people knowledgeable as to a given individual's training, experience, and performance also constitute part of this baseline; and these shall be made at levels commensurate with the status or role of the individual being checked in the program or project involved. Generally, the Chairman of the SEB will personally conduct the reference checks on the highest level of key personnel. However, oral discussions required to be held with proposers in the competitive range shall also be used to establish the relative merits of the personnel proposed by each competing firm when these personnel are unknown personally by the evaluators.

The presentation to the Source Selection Official must clearly and concisely set forth the results of the foregoing evaluation and discussions, including the relative strengths and weaknesses of key personnel as among competing proposers.

(5) Corporate or Company Resources

The Board shall comparatively assess the resources offered by each offeror in the general areas of manpower and facilities. For example, are the proper skill mixes and numbers of people to do the work on schedule being offered? Are the general type and capacity of facilities and, where required, special test equipment, being offered suitable and adequate to assure timely performance of the work? If the offeror does not possess adequate resources himself, has he demonstrated the ability to acquire them through subcontracts or otherwise?

2. WEIGHTING AND SCORING OF CRITERIA

- a. A numerical scoring system shall be used for evaluating the Mission Suitability Factors of competing offerors. Two cautions need to be kept in view by the Board when dealing with any scoring system:

- (1) It is only as good as the judgments made in selecting criteria and weights.
 - (2) If care is not exercised to limit reasonably the number of subdivisions to be rated, the scoring system will introduce an "averaging out" effect that inhibits selection based on the really significant discriminators among the offerors.
- b. Once the Mission Suitability Factors and their sub-elements are established, the Board shall determine the weight to be assigned to each, depending on its relative importance to the accomplishment of the procurement objectives. Complementary to this, a general plan of scoring the proposals will be established. Evaluation criteria and their relative importance shall be established in advance of RFP issuance to ensure impartial evaluation and so that prospective offerors may be notified in a general way of what the Government considers important. Specific weightings of the criteria to be employed will not be disclosed in the RFP or in any other way; nor will they be disclosed to evaluators below the level of the SEB itself. This, also, will tend to ensure objective and impartial evaluation as well as a sense of heightened responsibility among all evaluators. The weights assigned to the criteria to be evaluated will depend on the Board's judgment as to the relative importance of each. Normally a total of 1000 points will be used as a perfect score for any offeror evaluated.
- c. Subcriteria, weights, and the scoring system assigned shall be fixed before proposals are opened. Where, after proposals have been opened it seems to the SEB that the established criteria, weights, or scoring system will not contribute to the objectives for which they were conceived, the Board shall, nevertheless, complete the evaluation, and shall report on the originally established basis. A separate annex (in the written report) and a supplementary statement (in the oral presentation) shall be prepared and presented by the Board to the Source Selection Official covering its evaluation on the revised basis. The annex and supplementary statement shall clearly state the Board's reservations, state reasons for such reservations, and provide any revised scoring of offerors considered appropriate. The Source Selection Official will

base selection of a winning proposer on revised criteria or weights or a changed scoring system only if the General Counsel of NASA concurs that the integrity of the competition will not be compromised so as to be in violation of procurement law or regulation.

202 COST FACTORS

1. The principal aims of the SEB in its analysis of costs are to advise the Source Selection Official concerning (a) the validity of the costs as proposed by proposers within the competitive range; (b) the probable cost to the Government of accepting each proposal within the competitive range; (c) the probable cost differences among the proposers within the competitive range and their causes, including those due to differences in business methods and operating procedures and practices; and (d) its level of confidence in its analyses and projections regarding costs as they pertain to each fully evaluated proposal. Clear, concise Work Break-down Structures are of great value in understanding and assessing the cost proposals of each offeror, and their inclusion as an RFP requirement is encouraged. If it appears to the SEB that any offeror's approach or work plan for accomplishing the work proposed upon will require modification, it is expected that the Board will assess the probable costs of such modification and report thereon to the Source Selection Official.
2. Where the work to be done is a relatively straightforward task and the RFP does not require any extraordinary level of performance, a number of proposers may plainly be prepared to meet our need adequately, and in these cases the SEB, having performed the analyses described in paragraph 1, should pay particular heed to the comparison of costs, one to another. Where, on the other hand, the RFP, as a particular objective of the procurement, calls for significant advances in technology or performance of unusually high quality, then the SEB should pay particular attention to the likely costs of the various proposers as they are related to their respective work proposals.
3. All cost categories and amounts which are or should be present in an offeror's cost proposal are to be analyzed by the SEB and reported to the Source Selection Official. In the event that SEB members have different opinions as to the cost analyses, these differing opinions shall be reported to the Source Selection Official.

so that he may form his own opinion as to the confidence to be attributed to the analyses.

203 OTHER FACTORS

1. Within this category fall factors other than Mission Suitability and Cost Factors that the Source Selection Official considers in making a final selection. Other Factors may become pertinent any time in the acquisition process up to the moment of source selection.
2. Other Factors include:
 - a. Financial condition and capability.
 - b. Corporate experience and past performance.
 - c. Priority placed by the corporate level of the offeror on the work being proposed, or importance of the business to corporate management.
 - d. Stability of labor-management relations.
 - e. Extent of proposed small business and minority enterprise participation in subcontract arrangements.
 - f. Geographic distribution of subcontract arrangements.
 - g. Any others pertinent to the particular procurement.
3. Other Factors will generally be known at the time the RFP is issued. When this is the case, they are to be referenced specifically in the RFP, evaluated by the SEB, and reported on to the Source Selection Official. Certain factors in the Other Factors category, such as financial condition and capability and past performance, may undergo change up to the moment of source selection. Although the SEB has made its formal report to the Source Selection Official, the Board shall have continuing responsibility to report to the Source Selection Official, until its discharge, any changes in its evaluation of Other Factors due to circumstances affecting an offeror different from those pertinent at the time of the Board's formal report. In this connection it is not intended that after its report the Board actively pursue continuing evaluation. What is expected is that matters in the Other Factors category which come to the attention of the Board and which might be expected to

be pertinent to the selection decision will be communicated to the Source Selection Official.

4. Information regarding some Other Factors is generally available to an SEB in the form of pre-award surveys, NASA Inspection Reports, facility capability reports, purchasing system surveys, audit reports, Equal Employment Opportunity surveys and the like. The Board shall make efforts to identify and use existing reports which are timely before initiating original inquiries.
5. While written reports of certain aspects of an offeror's past experience and performance, such as those identified in paragraph 4, may be significant, they should not be the exclusive reliance of the Board in evaluating these areas. In addition, personal inquiries should be made with Government managers likely to be knowledgeable about the past experience and performance of the offerors.

6. PAST PERFORMANCE

- a. Past performance is especially important, because how well the offeror did on earlier work for the Government can be a very significant indicator of how well he can be expected to perform the job at hand. Many organizations exhibit characteristics that persist over time: For example, resiliency in the face of trouble, resourcefulness, management determination to see that the organization lives up to certain standards, skill in the development of key people, and so on. It is, therefore, well to attempt to look into this kind of indicator which is independent of the proposal submitted by the offeror.
- b. It is a specific responsibility of the Board to collect information on the past performance of offerors considered to be within the competitive range. The Board Chairman should personally contact, to the extent feasible, program/project managers within NASA or other Government agencies in a position to have observed responsibly the performance of the various offerors as prime contractors or significant subcontractors, and obtain their views on the quality of the work the offeror did (or is doing) on the jobs in question. In the event a substantial unfavorable response is received which, in the opinion of the Board Chairman, is of sufficient importance so as to warrant

presentation to the Source Selection Official, the offeror in question will be provided an opportunity during written or oral discussions (see Chapter 4) in response to a written question from the Board, to submit in writing its side of the story.

- c. With respect to past performance, it is the Board's role to collect information, identify it as to source, and present it to the Source Selection Official. All information, including project manager assessments and offeror responses, will be (1) made part of the Board record, (2) contained in the Board report, and (3) presented to the Source Selection Official.

CHAPTER 3: MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

300 GENERAL

This chapter provides guidelines relating to the membership, organization and responsibilities of Source Evaluation Boards.

301 MEMBERSHIP

1. COMPOSITION

- a. Source Evaluation Boards shall be comprised of an appropriate mix of qualified management, technical, scientific, contracting, and business experts. Each Board shall have a legal advisor.
- b. While in general the Chairman, Board, and Committee members are drawn from the installation having cognizance of the procurement, personnel from other NASA installations, or other Government agencies are to be used when their services are required and available.
- c. It is desirable that voting members of the Board include people who will have key assignments on the project to which the procurement is directed.
- d. SEB membership normally need not exceed seven voting members, including the Chairman. If additional support is needed, the use of committees, panels, or other subgroupings is authorized. The number of such supporting personnel shall be kept as small as the nature of the subject matter to be covered permits. Wherever feasible, assignments to SEB membership shall be on a full-time basis. Where this is not feasible, SEB membership and duties are to take precedence over other regular duties.

2. DESIGNATION

Designation of the SEB Chairman and Board members shall, in the case where the Administrator is the Source Selection Official, be by the cognizant Program Associate Administrator or Assistant Administrator. In all other cases, designation shall be by the cognizant Source

Selection Official (see Foreword). A designation letter to the Installation Director shall be prepared to accompany the applicable Procurement Plan for signature of the appropriate official named herein in accordance with the sample letter in Appendix A.

3. VOTING AND NONVOTING MEMBERS

- a. The following people, in addition to any others named by the Appointing Official, shall be on all SEB's and designated as voting members:

Chairman of the Board.

A senior, experienced procurement official.

Committee Chairmen (except where this imposes an undue workload).

All voting members of the SEB shall have equal status as rating officials.

- b. The following people shall be on all SEB's as non-voting ex-officio members:

Director of the cognizant field installation or his designee.

Cognizant Program Associate Administrator, Assistant Administrator, or his designee for the purpose, when the Administrator is the Source Selection Official.

Chairmen of SEB Committees when they are not voting members.

The Procurement Officer of the installation (unless he is a voting member).

The Contracting Officer who will negotiate the contract(s) resulting from the SEB's activities (unless he is a voting member).

The SEB Secretary.

Nonvoting members may state their views and contribute to the discussion in Board deliberations but they may not participate in the actual rating process. The Chairman may invite them to attend Board meetings or they may be consulted as necessary without attending.

302 ORGANIZATION

The organization of a Source Evaluation Board is to be tailored to the requirements of the particular procurement. This can range from the simplest situation, where the Board conducts the evaluation and fact-finding without use of Committees or other subgroups, to a highly complex situation involving a truly major program (e.g., Apollo or Space Shuttle), where two or more Committees are formed and these in turn are assisted by special panels in particular areas. Appropriate organization somewhere between these two extremes is generally to be expected, but in all cases the number of committees, panels, or groups should be kept to a minimum consistent with the requirements of the procurement.

303 RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Source Evaluation Board proper is the central group in source evaluation to which all other activities and authorities, including committees, panels, and the like contribute. Its function is to carry out the activities set forth in this Manual culminating in a final evaluation of all proposals and report of findings to the Source Selection Official. The Board's evaluations are to be based on all available information, including proposals, Committee and Panel reports, discussions, reference and other appropriate checks, and the personal knowledge of the individual members in the areas of their expertise. Subject to such line management approvals as may be required, it is responsible for establishing the factors for evaluation, mission suitability evaluation criteria, qualification criteria (where applicable), and reviewing and approving the RFP prior to its issuance. It must determine which proposals are in the competitive range and participate in the written or oral discussions to be held with proposers in the competitive range. The SEB may not delegate its evaluation responsibility in whole or in part. Committee, panel, etc., findings and reports to it must be reviewed by the Board itself, with its own collective judgment to be applied to such findings and reports in arriving at its evaluation conclusions for purposes of reporting to the Source Selection Official.
2. The Chairman of the SEB is the principal operating executive in the evaluation process. This carries with it a responsibility in a management system which is broader in scope and includes more requirements for

coordination across different specialized lines and disciplines, plus up and down different management channels, than is common in most situations. The Chairman is expected to manage his team efficiently, at the lowest possible expense and time, but without compromising the solidity of the findings which will be required to achieve the SEB's basic objective, i.e., to provide the Source Selection Official with the basis for a sound selection decision.

3. The SEB Secretary functions as the principal administrative assistant to the Board Chairman. His duties and responsibilities are set forth in Appendix B.
4. The SEB Committee functions essentially as a fact-finding arm of the SEB, generally in a broad grouping of related disciplines (e.g., technical, management). It is to be comprised of people well-versed and experienced in each of the major disciplines under its aegis. For example, a "Management Committee" could include people expert in the areas of organization, pricing, personnel, labor, contracting, facilities, and the like. The Committee examines in detail each proposal, or such portion thereof as may be assigned to it by the SEB. This examination shall be for the purpose of evaluating and rating comparatively such proposals or portions in accordance with the Board-approved evaluation factors and scoring system, to submit written reports to the SEB covering its evaluations, and otherwise to be responsive to requirements levied on it by the Board, including further justification or reconsideration of its findings and ratings.
5. Committee Chairmen shall, with respect to their respective Committees, exercise the same responsibility for applicable administrative and procedural matters as does the SEB Chairman for the Board itself.
6. The SEB Panel functions as a fact-finding arm of the Committee in a given specialized area of the Committee's responsibilities. Panels are established when a particular area requires more depth of analysis than can feasibly be provided by an individual member of the Committee.
7. All personnel involved in SEB activities are responsible for familiarizing themselves and complying with the requirements of this Manual and other applicable regulations. To this end they are to seek the advice and

guidance of the SEB Chairman and the SEB Secretary, and any locally-established SEB advisory group. The Chairman, in particular, shall require each Board, Committee, and Panel member to familiarize himself with the provisions of the current "Standards of Conduct for NASA Employees" (NHB 1900.1A) regarding Conflict of Interest, and to inform the Chairman in writing if his participation presents a real or apparent conflict of interest situation.

8. Prior to the selection and announcement of a contractor for award, NASA personnel shall not reveal any information concerning the evaluation to anyone who is not also participating in the same evaluation proceedings, and then only to the extent that such information is required in connection with such proceedings.
9. Subsequent to selection and announcement of a contractor for award, information concerning the proceedings of the SEB and data developed by the SEB will be made available to others within NASA only when the requestor demonstrates a need to know for a NASA purpose. These will be made available to persons outside NASA, including other Government agencies, only when such disclosure is concurred in by the Office of General Counsel. In this connection, reference is made to 18 USC 1905 which prohibits any officer or employee of the United States from disclosing or divulging certain kinds of business confidential and trade secret information unless authorized by law.

CHAPTER 4: SEB OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR SOLICITATION AND EVALUATION

400 GENERAL

This chapter describes the procedural steps involved in preparing the SEB for its work and outlines Board activities for the solicitation and evaluation of proposals. Discussion of the substantive considerations involved in evaluation is set forth in Chapter 2.

401 INITIAL BOARD ACTIVITIES

1. Official Board activities for a particular procurement will commence upon approval of the procurement plan and receipt by the Chairman of the letter establishing the Board and designating its members. However, prior to the official appointment of the Board, the proposed Chairman and members may hold preliminary meetings to accomplish such tasks as Board member orientation to proposed operational procedures, security measures that will be utilized, and preliminary review of the proposed RFP.
2. Once the Board is officially established, the Chairman shall ensure that:
 - a. A management and staffing plan is prepared, indicating necessary personnel and other resource requirements, and including a time schedule for Board actions and events leading to presentation of findings to the Source Selection Official.
 - b. Each Board member is furnished appropriate materials as to the nature of the procurement, the designation letter, approved Procurement Plan, and the approved time schedule.
 - c. Each Board member, or other person who may be concerned is cautioned on the restrictions on disclosure of information during the SEB process, and avoidance of conflicts of interest.
 - d. The results of in-house and contracted study efforts which he considers relevant are or will be made equally available to all competitors in as timely

a manner as is practicable.

- e. The list of sources to be solicited is developed and approved with the assistance of the cognizant procurement and program or project offices.
- f. Prior to RFP issuance, qualification criteria and evaluation factors and criteria are established.
- g. The RFP is reviewed and approved prior to its issuance.
- h. Prior to opening of proposals, the Board determines what evaluation factors and criteria to assign to committees, panels or groups. While it is necessary to give the committees all information required to conduct their function of comparative evaluation of assigned portions of proposals, it is not appropriate to disclose to them the Board's overall weighting and scoring system. Although the Board is responsible for all scoring systems employed, committees are expected to develop their own sub-criteria and weights and submit them to the Board for approval, preferably before RFP issuance, but in any event before opening of proposals. The Board shall adjust the committee recommendations, as necessary, to conform to its overall plan for evaluation. The Board shall guard against unduly detailed subcriteria which may obscure identification of significant discriminators.

402 QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

- 1. It is NASA policy to offer the opportunity to compete for its procurement as broadly as is consistent with the nature of each particular procurement. However, in view of the distinctive characteristics of NASA programs and in the interest of the public, those potential offerors who do not possess the minimum qualifications and resources necessary to perform the proposed work of a given procurement should not be encouraged to incur proposal and other expenses involved in competitive submissions.
- 2. To accomplish this objective without limiting meaningful competition requires early and intense effort on the part of the Board, working in conjunction with the program and procurement staff elements most familiar with the procurement requirements.

3. When the nature of the procurement requires, qualification criteria shall be established. These will consist of those elements of special experience, capability, facilities, or other factors which are critical to the program performance aspects of the procurement.
4. In establishing "qualification criteria" care must be exercised to restrict them to those essential to the successful completion of the contract work. Such qualification criteria will be used by the Board to screen proposed source lists so that only qualified concerns will be solicited to submit proposals.
5. Qualification criteria may be employed only where it is possible for the Board to establish such criteria which are demonstrably justified from the nature of the particular procurement. These criteria must be susceptible to objective application to all potential sources.
6. Notwithstanding the considerations which lead to elimination of sources from solicitation, proposals submitted by offerors not solicited by NASA shall be considered, since qualification criteria are not intended to restrict competition but only to discourage costly proposal submissions from potential offerors to whom award would not appear to be likely.
7. When developed by the Board and approved, the qualification criteria established shall be clearly set forth in the RFP and shall be included in the synopsis.

403 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) - REVIEW AND APPROVAL

1. The effectiveness of evaluation is dependent, in large measure, on how well the work to be performed and the basic groundrules under which the competition will be conducted are described in the RFP. Accordingly, the RFP shall be reviewed by the Board and by appropriate levels of management prior to issuance to determine its acceptability in these respects.
2. In reviewing the RFP, the SEB and management shall ensure that the following matters pertinent to source evaluation and selection are included and treated as indicated in each instance:
 - a. Any qualification criteria shall be identified and described.

- b. Evaluation criteria for Mission Suitability Factors shall be described, together with a general narrative explanation of their relative importance. Specific weights and subcriteria shall not be included.
- c. Cost Factors shall be described. Research and development work is generally directed toward stated objectives which have not previously been accomplished. Since specifications for its accomplishment are not known in advance, usual practice is to employ a cost-type contractual instrument in effecting the procurement action itself. A proposer's confidence regarding his ability to perform at or within his estimate of cost may be indicated by his willingness to share risk by incentive arrangements and by accepting ceilings on cost categories such as overhead and general administrative expense.

Where a cost-type contract will be executed covering support services, the importance of indirect cost management is likely to be of even greater significance to the Source Selection Official than in the case of contracts for research and development because direct costs for equivalent quality personnel will tend to be similar among the various proposers. Where RFP's so contemplate, incentive arrangements and specific ceilings on indirect costs could well be decisive in competitions respecting service requirements.

- d. Other Factors that are known to be applicable shall be described.
- e. The method of evaluation shall be explained clearly, but concisely, so that prospective offerors may understand the SEB's use and treatment of the three categories of Factors, and so that they will know that the Source Selection Official, not the SEB, will make the judgments required, all factors considered, in selecting the winning offeror.
- f. The applicability of PRD 70-15 (Revised) of September 15, 1972 to the conduct of written or oral discussions shall be stated.
- g. Where cost proposals are to be permitted to be submitted at a date later than that prescribed for submission of technical proposals, a notice to that

effect shall be included in the RFP, stating the required date for both submissions.

- h. Where applicable, a notice that a preproposal conference is to be held shall be included, stating its purpose, when, where, and the ground rules.
 - i. The Statement of Work shall describe as clearly and concisely as possible the product or service to be procured. It shall be structured, to the extent practicable, to identify the important areas of emphasis for evaluation and selection purposes. There must be no inconsistencies between it and the evaluation and factors to be considered by the SEB, and ultimately, the Source Selection Official.
 - j. Pertinent requirements for reports, data, and the like that are essential to contract negotiation and performance are to be included. However, the RFP is to identify those elements of proposals that are not critical for source evaluation and selection and to prescribe their inclusion in a separate section of the proposal. Wherever practicable, the RFP shall provide for submission of summary information on the noncritical elements, sufficient to ensure that there is understanding of an agreement with the governing requirement. The RFP shall state, however, that the offeror(s) selected for final contract negotiation will be expected to provide detailed information respecting costs and other materials relating to the noncritical elements and that the contract to be awarded after source selection will include coverage of these elements. Illustrative specifics of this requirement are set forth in NASA PR Subparts 1.50 and 1.53.
- 3. In the most important cases, where the Administrator will be the Source Selection Official, the Program Associate Administrator, in consultation with the Associate Administrator for Organization and Management, may request other top management officials to review the RFP coverage of qualification criteria, statement of work, evaluation factors, criteria, and other matters of significance to evaluation and selection.
 - 4. The Field Installation Director, in procurements involving SEB's under his cognizance which he determines to be sensitive or of major significance, may similarly designate additional reviewing officials; and to the

extent he considers it necessary or appropriate, he may arrange for participation in the review by Headquarters representatives.

5. Beyond the foregoing requirements for specific attention and review by the SEB and line management, the RFP shall, of course, comply with the requirements of all applicable procurement regulations and other NASA issuances bearing on the subject.

404 PREPROPOSAL CONFERENCE

1. Because of its inherent benefits to industry and to the Government, a preproposal conference generally should be held in all procurements of such significance as to require the use of formal Source Evaluation Board procedures.
2. A primary objective of a preproposal conference is to ensure that the Government's requirements in the procurement are properly stated and understood by prospective offerors. This includes the Work Statement itself, any qualification criteria requirements, evaluation factors and criteria and their relative importance, and the groundrules for the competition (e.g., the three categories of Factors and how used in evaluation and selection, and the conduct of written or oral discussions).
3. The conference should be set at a point in time after RFP issuance that will have provided a reasonable time for recipients to have read it, yet not too far along to preclude meaningful use of the information obtained at the conference.
4. The conference should generally be initiated by a Government presentation of the significant aspects of the procurement with a question and answer session to follow. Copies of all questions and answers shall be given to all participating prospective offerors. It is essential that the terms of the RFP not be altered during the course of the conference. Should it become apparent that the RFP needs revision, this is to be done by formal amendment to the RFP itself.

405 INITIAL EVALUATION

1. HANDLING OF PROPOSALS

Upon receipt of proposals, the contracting officer

shall time-log each proposal and send it unopened to the SEB Chairman (or his designee, generally the SEB Secretary) who shall maintain control of all proposals throughout the evaluation process.

2. CONVENING THE BOARD

The Board shall be convened as soon as possible after receipt of proposals. Generally, at least one day will be allotted for Board members to review the several proposals for familiarization purposes. In conducting its business, the Board and its Committees must at all times take into account RFP provisions that bear on the evaluation.

3. CONVENING COMMITTEES

The initial phase of evaluation generally will involve Committees. As promptly as possible, established Committees are to be convened. The Board shall transmit to the Committees necessary scoring systems previously approved by the Board, proposals or portions thereof to be evaluated, instructions regarding the expected function of each Committee, and all data considered necessary or helpful. The Committee Chairman is responsible for instructing the members as to committee functions, responsibilities, and procedures.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. While oral reports may be given to the Board, the Committee function requires the submission of a written report which shall include:

- (1) Copies of individual worksheets showing scores (if applicable) and supporting comments therefor to the lowest level scored.
- (2) A scoring sheet reflecting scores (if applicable) at those summary levels which the Board assigned for scoring.
- (3) A statement, keyed to the summary levels, covering any strength of the proposal which significantly affected the scoring; any weakness of the proposal which significantly affected the scoring; and any reservations or qualifications, with reasons bearing on the assigned scores, which the Committee, or any member thereof, desires to bring to the attention of the Board.

- b. All reports submitted by Committees, Panels, groups, etc., are to be retained as part of the Board records but need not necessarily be included as part of the Board Report to the Source Selection Official. A Committee report should be included with the Board report if it is so significant that its inclusion is necessary to the Source Selection Official's understanding of the Board's action.
- c. Committee reports and findings shall be reviewed by the Board. The Board is to consider the Committee ratings, take cognizance of any reservations or qualifications stated by the Committee or otherwise known to the Board; and rescore the proposals or validate the Committee scores for each evaluation criterion according to its own collective judgment. Board Minutes shall reflect this evaluating process.

5. IDENTIFICATION OF UNACCEPTABLE PROPOSALS

- a. Subsequent to the review of Committee ratings and other information known to the Committees or the Board, and prior to further evaluation of proposals by the Board, the Board may discontinue the evaluation of any proposal which is unacceptable because:
 - (1) It does not represent a reasonable initial effort to address itself to the essential requirements of the RFP, or clearly demonstrates that the offeror does not understand the requirements of the RFP;
 - (2) In research or development procurement, a substantial design deficiency is inherent in the proposal and sufficient correction or improvement to consider the proposal acceptable would require virtually an entirely new technical proposal; or
 - (3) It contains major mission suitability deficiencies or omissions or out-of-line costs which discussions with the offeror could not reasonably be expected to cure.
- b. Simple technical nonresponsiveness in the sense in which the term is used in formal advertising is not alone sufficient to constitute unacceptability, if the proposal is otherwise competitive, and negotiations after selection reasonably offer the likelihood of acceptable resolution.

c. Documentation of Unacceptable Proposals

Documentation must be prepared by the Board as to why the deficiencies of any proposal are believed to be of sufficient significance to warrant discontinuing the evaluation of a proposal at this point in the evaluation process.

6. COMPLETING INITIAL EVALUATION

- a. After notification to offerors whose proposals are not acceptable in accordance with paragraph 408, the SEB shall complete its initial evaluation of all the remaining proposals in accordance with its established scoring and evaluation system. Comparative scores shall be developed for all proposals for Mission Suitability Factors.
- b. During the initial SEB evaluation, a list of strengths and weaknesses for each proposal should be developed, together with an indication of whether they are considered major or minor, and correctable or not. Not only are strengths and weaknesses a valuable shorthand summary of discriminators among proposals, but they give the Source Selection Official a good measure of what the points assigned to different criteria are really worth in the opinion of the Board. This can be invaluable to him in his consideration of highly competitive proposals. The strengths and weaknesses should be related to the evaluation factors and criteria.
- c. Following the foregoing analyses, the proposals shall be reviewed with a view toward determining which are within the competitive range; namely, those which have a reasonable chance of being selected for final award. In making its determination, the Board shall evaluate the potential for improving the competitive position of the proposals by written or oral discussions. In determining the competitive range, the Board shall consider mission suitability, cost or price, and other factors. The initial number of proposals considered to be within the competitive range may be narrowed as a result of discussions. Competitive range determinations are final unless the Source Selection Official determines otherwise.

406 FINAL EVALUATION1. BOARD ACTIONS

The final evaluation arrives at findings which are reported to the Source Selection Official so that he may select the offeror he considers will perform the contract in the manner and under the terms most advantageous to the Government. Preparatory to formulating its final evaluation the Board must:

- a. Conduct written or oral discussions with those offerors found to be within the competitive range;
- b. Identify the significant strengths and weaknesses of the offerors;
- c. Ascertain, by plant visits or otherwise, the capabilities of the offerors within the competitive range; and then
- d. Exercise its best collective and objective judgment in arriving at its findings for presentation to the Source Selection Official.

2. WRITTEN OR ORAL DISCUSSIONS

- a. The conduct of written or oral discussions with those offerors whose proposals are determined to be within the competitive range shall be in accordance with PRD 70-15, (Revised) of September 15, 1972 and any revisions or amendments of that Directive in effect at the time of a particular SEB's operations.
- b. Once the Board has identified the offerors with whom written or oral discussions will be conducted, there are operational aspects to be considered. Key actions (not all-inclusive) in preparing for and conducting written or oral discussions are the establishment of:
 - (1) The time(s) and place(s) for the conduct of discussions. This requires establishment of the order of discussions with offerors. Where feasible (as, for example, when the discussions are to be held at the NASA installation) the order should be established alphabetically. Where discussions are to be at offeror's plants

or offices it may be that geographic dispersion will be the driver, taking into account travel time and cost considerations. The objective is logic and impartiality.

- (2) Topics for discussion. This will include preparation and issuance of questions common to all offerors, as well as those that are peculiar to any given one, allowing adequate time for development of responses by offerors. (See paragraph 203-6 for treatment of adverse reports on an offeror's past performance.)
- (3) The government team that will engage in the discussions, and identification of the offeror's counterparts wanted for the discussions, with notice to offerors.
- (4) A common cutoff date for receipt of revised proposals that may be required as a result of the discussions. While the cutoff date must be such as to permit adequate time to all offerors, for submission of revised proposals, particular care must be taken to ensure that there is no compression of time allowed to the offeror with whom discussions were last held (example: if two weeks is adequate time for submission, and a week elapsed between discussions with the first and last offeror, then the time allowed should be two weeks from the date of last discussions).

3. PLANT INSPECTIONS

- a. Inspections at the plants of competing offerors are generally a valuable part of the Board's evaluation process. For instance, in procurements where significant experimental, research, developmental, testing, fabrication, or other work is to be performed (the quality of which may be affected by a contractor's plant or facilities), a complete evaluation may require an on-site visit by the Board. For other procurements, such as certain service type contracts, plant inspections may serve no useful purpose.
- b. When plant inspections are made, the visiting team shall include Board members and such specialized personnel as the Board may desire. Where practicable, one member of each inspecting team should be

the same Board member to provide continuity and a basis for comparison. Such visits are to be made after the Board has had an opportunity to evaluate, in some detail, the proposals, as well as records of past performance of the competing offerors on similar projects. The aims of such visits, in addition to conducting written or oral discussions as prescribed by PRD 70-15 (Revised) of September 15, 1972, include the following:

- (1) Reviewing with resident Government personnel experience and performance on related past projects.
- (2) Gauging the degree of capacity and interest of the offeror to undertake the project in light of other work planned or in process.
- (3) Examining such matters as:
 - (a) Plant capacities,
 - (b) Management and technical capability of personnel,
 - (c) Availability of existing facilities (both Government-owned and contractor-owned),
 - (d) Adequacy of offerors' accounting practices and cost controls, and
 - (e) Offeror's records in forecasting and meeting program schedules.

407 FINAL SCORING OF PROPOSALS

1. After consideration of all Committee reports, information received from offerors through plant visits, written and oral discussions, and revised proposals, if any, and all information received from other sources, the Board shall finally score proposals from a mission suitability standpoint.
2. These final scores will be the culmination of a series of scorings, reevaluations, changes, and rescorings which occur at various points in the evaluation process. Therefore, a logical audit trail shall be maintained of

the rationale for the scoring changes, including a step-by-step account of the events leading to the final scores.

3. The scores must represent the collective judgment of the Board as to the comparative standings of the offerors in the areas evaluated, and its integrated collective judgment as to their comparative standing in overall mission suitability.
4. The scores shall reflect the strengths, weaknesses, and discriminators the Board finds in the proposals, so that the reasons for differences in scores can readily be explained to and understood by the Source Selection Official.
5. The Board shall also complete and report on its analyses and findings with respect to Cost Factors and Other Factors.

408 NOTICE AND DEBRIEFING FOR UNSUCCESSFUL OFFERORS

1. There are in most cases three points in time in the procurement process involving SEB's when it is determined that a proposal is no longer to be considered for contract award:
 - a. After evaluation of proposals as submitted,
 - b. After written or oral discussions with those then in the competitive range, and
 - c. Upon selection by the Source Selection Official.
2. In the first instance, proposals may be found either to be unacceptable or not in the competitive range. In the second instance, it would be a competitive range determination. In the first two instances, each offeror involved shall be promptly notified that his proposal is no longer to be considered for contract award, stating as the reason that his proposal was unacceptable or determined not to be in the competitive range, as appropriate. In the third instance, each offeror involved shall be promptly notified, stating as the reason the fact that the Source Selection Official (by title) has selected the (specified) offeror(s) for final contract negotiations. In the event two or more offerors are so selected, the unsuccessful offeror(s) shall, of course, similarly be notified after final selection of one offeror.

3. In any of the three instances, if any offeror so requests in writing, it shall be accorded a formal debriefing after final contractor selection, but before award, in accordance with the current NMI 5103.1A.

CHAPTER 5: SEB REPORT AND PRESENTATION

500 APPLICABILITY

The provisions of this chapter are specifically directed to reports and presentations to the Administrator when he is the Source Selection Official; however, they apply equally to reports and presentations made to other Source Selection Officials.

501 RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURE

1. The Board shall make a written report of its findings, signed by the Chairman and all voting members of the Board. It shall present its report and make an accompanying oral presentation, to the Source Selection Official. Guidelines for the report and the oral presentation are set forth in Appendix C.
2. Normally, a presentation to the Administrator should be preceded by preliminary presentations to the Field Installation Director and to the cognizant Program Associate Administrator. In these preliminary presentations, the recipient officials are responsible for ensuring that the:
 - a. Requirements of this Manual and all other applicable agency policies have been complied with in the solicitation and evaluation processes.
 - b. Report and presentation accurately convey the activities and findings of the Board.
 - c. Oral presentation is arranged and conducted in a business-like manner, it is complete and informative, and it can be accommodated within the time allocated by the Source Selection Official.
3. The Program Associate Administrator, or his counterpart as the case may be, is additionally responsible for arranging with the Executive Officer the time and place of oral presentation to the Administrator. He shall additionally ensure that the proper officials are invited to attend the presentation. In this respect, when the Administrator is the Source Selection Official, see the current NMI 5103.4B.

4. In carrying out their responsibilities with respect to the report and oral presentation, the management officials involved shall not direct changes (1) to evaluation factors, criteria, established weights, or scoring systems, and (2) in the substance of the Board's findings. They may, however, direct the Board to reconvene to rectify procedural omissions or to revise the method of presentation and the organization of the report. Unauthorized disclosure of Board information is prohibited.
5. Copies of the SEB records and related information must be adequately safeguarded throughout the entire proceedings.

CHAPTER 6: MULTIPLE SELECTIONS - FINAL CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

600 GENERAL

While SEB procedures contemplate that the Source Selection Official will be in a position to select a single source for the procurement subsequent to the Board presentation to him, a variety of considerations may lead the Source Selection Official to direct that contract negotiations be conducted with two or more firms. Such negotiations are to result in complete contract documents signed by the offerors and the contracting officer which may be accepted by the agency upon determination of the winner by the Source Selection Official.

601 NEGOTIATIONS

1. The Board shall consult with management and the negotiating team as to negotiation positions and objectives and as to information to be obtained during negotiations to assist the Board in making its final evaluation and report after the negotiations.
2. The objectives of negotiations are essentially the same as those where a single offeror has been selected for final negotiation and award; that is, each offeror's correctible weaknesses should be pointed out and corrected during negotiations, using whatever technical and other information is known and which the Government has the right to use. Similarly estimated costs or prices should be negotiated to the most favorable levels practicable.
3. The final contract negotiation process differs from the written and oral discussions previously held with offerors in the competitive range. The latter discussions have the specific function of obtaining information for evaluation and selection purposes, while the final contract negotiations have the additional function of presenting that information in contractually binding form. For this reason it is essential that each offeror be brought to the most favorable terms that the negotiation process can produce, including technical and scientific approaches, management arrangements, and estimated costs (or fixed prices where applicable), and cost element ceilings as appropriate. The prohibition against auction techniques applies, of course, to these negotiations.

602 EVALUATION

1. Upon completion of the negotiations and agreement on contract terms, the Board shall conduct a final evaluation, focusing on a comparative analysis of the contracts negotiated, their relative strengths and remaining weaknesses, their prices or probable costs, and any other factors which might influence the selection.
2. The evaluation must build on the Board's earlier Report and presentation to the Source Selection Official which resulted in the decision to have multiple contract negotiations conducted. The evaluation is to determine the effects, if any, of the contract negotiations on the Board's earlier final mission suitability scores, as well as on cost considerations and relevant Other Factors; however, an arithmetic rescoring is not to be accomplished. Particular attention shall be given to any instructions which the Source Selection Official may have given when he directed the complete contract negotiations.

603 REPORT

1. Upon completing its evaluation of the results of contract negotiations, the Board shall report its findings to the Source Selection Official. This is to be by oral presentation and supplemental written report.
2. The report and presentation shall include the following:
 - a. A summary review of the predecessor report and presentation.
 - b. Brief discussion of significant weaknesses and strengths of the companies involved, as reported and presented in the predecessor report and presentation, with emphasis on key discriminators, if any.
 - c. How any instructions given by the Source Selection Official were carried out.
 - d. The results of the negotiation, and the impact, if any, on the Board's findings and conclusions in the predecessor report, covering Mission Suitability, Cost, and Other Factors, as appropriate.
 - e. Discussions of any matters or areas of substance that arose during the negotiations which were not

present in the proposals or the earlier oral or written discussions.

3. The contract negotiator shall be present and participate as appropriate in the presentation to the Source Selection Official. He is to have with him at the presentation copies of the contracts, as signed by the Government and the companies.

SOURCE EVALUATION BOARD MANUAL - APPENDIX A

SAMPLE LETTER OF DESIGNATION

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT: Source Evaluation For _____

Pursuant to Chapter 3 of the Source Evaluation Board Manual (NHB 5103.6), I hereby designate the following individuals to serve as members of the Source Evaluation Board for _____:

Chairman:

Name of individual, functional title, and organizational assignment.

Other Voting Members:

Names of individuals, functional titles, and organizational assignments.

Nonvoting Secretary:

Name, functional title, and organizational assignment.

The Source Evaluation Board will conduct its business in strict accordance with the provisions of the Source Evaluation Board Manual. It will be the responsibility of the Chairman to determine that each Board member (both voting and nonvoting) is fully conversant with the instructions contained in this publication. Board duties will take precedence over other normal duties of the Board members.

Attention of the Chairman and each Board member is particularly directed to the Foreword of the Source Evaluation Board Manual which specifies who shall be authorized to select a source for the negotiation of a contract. Attention is further invited to paragraph 101 relating to the role of management in the SEB process, since the importance of the SEB function to Agency programs necessitates continual management involvement in the selection

A

Appendix A

process. It is emphasized that the findings of the Source Evaluation Board are only guides for the final selection process and must be presented in sufficient depth of information to permit the intelligent weighing of alternatives. All acceptable proposals will be evaluated, ranked, and reported. The Board's written findings will give no consideration to elements which are extraneous to the objectives of the procurement.

Attention of the Chairman and the Board is further specifically directed to NMI 5101.3A and NASA PR 3.804-4 which prohibit the disclosure of information to anyone who is not also participating in the same evaluation proceedings. Prior to the opening of proposals, the Board may disclose such information as may be necessary for the proper development of the Request for Proposals and then only to the extent and to those persons considered essential for that purpose. After the opening of proposals, all information will be kept privy to the members (voting and nonvoting) of such Board and to properly designated committees and panels on a need-to-know basis. The right to information on a need-to-know basis does not extend to the normal chain of supervision affecting any member of the Board or arising out of technical responsibility for the action being evaluated except as specifically approved by the Chairman on a case-by-case basis. Individuals designated by the Chairman will be notified by him, in writing, with respect to the privileged character of information.

Signature of Designating Official

SOURCE EVALUATION BOARD MANUAL - APPENDIX B

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SEB SECRETARY

The SEB Secretary shall attend all Board meetings and shall serve as the principal assistant to the Board Chairman to ensure that the following are accomplished:

1. Obtaining secure work areas for conduct of Board activity.
2. Developing and implementing procedures to control access to SEB work area to ensure safeguarding of SEB proceedings and data.
3. Obtaining material, supplies, and equipment needed by the Board.
4. Arranging for the preparation, reproduction, control, and distribution of material relating to the activity of the SEB and its Committees.
5. Preparation and distribution of agenda for Board meetings.
6. Obtaining and distributing current applicable procedures, policies, instructions, etc., to Board and Committee members and others involved.
7. Recording the substantive issues discussed.
8. Follow-up on action items assigned to Board members to ensure that no delay of the Board schedule will occur.
9. Obtaining the Chairman's approval of Board Minutes and having copies reproduced and distributed to all voting Board members (and nonvoting, if so directed by the Chairman). The original copy of the Minutes shall be retained by the Secretary and incorporated in a back-up book.
10. Assisting in the preparation and assembly of the Board's Report of Findings and Presentation Charts. Arranging for reproduction and distribution.
11. Destroying all information in excess of the Board's need.

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12. After formal selection announcement, accumulation, packaging and forwarding documentation pertinent to the Board's work to the cognizant Contracting Officer for retention throughout the life of the contract.
13. Surveying the area where Board activity occurred and arranging for the return of equipment and materials as appropriate.

SOURCE EVALUATION BOARD MANUAL - APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES FOR SEB REPORT AND PRESENTATION
TO THE SOURCE SELECTION OFFICIAL

In preparing the SEB Report, emphasis should be placed on substance. This Appendix C provides guidance on content and format of the SEB Report as well as the Oral Presentation to the Source Selection Official. Reasonable use of this guidance should facilitate proper substance. The guidance material is designed to be appropriate for most procurements. If a specific procurement has peculiarities which cause the proposed format to be impractical, the Chairman may alter it in any manner that does not detract from the substance.

The presentation to the Source Selection Official consists of two parts, the written Board Report and an oral briefing. This Appendix sets forth the minimum presentation requirements. The depth of detail and the use of additional schedules or other information is, of course, governed by the nature and scope of the subject being presented.

The Board shall approve the written Report and the graphic material to be used for the accompanying oral presentation. Flip chart or viewgraph presentations are appropriate where the nature of the presentation permits. To the extent feasible, copies of visual aids to be utilized for the oral presentation should be separately bound in a folder identified as "Briefing Charts", to accompany the written Report.

A "Glossary of Terms" should be included in the SEB Report when appropriate to explain acronyms or alphabetic abbreviations.

Copies of the Board Report and related graphic material shall be serially numbered and controlled by the Board Secretary and may be distributed or otherwise disclosed only to persons having responsibilities relating to the specific source evaluation proceeding involved, except as may otherwise be approved by the Administrator or his designee. Copies of the Board Report and related graphic material to be used in the presentation to the Administrator are to be distributed in the time and manner, and to the people, as determined by the Executive Officer pursuant to the current NMI 5103.4B and any other current applicable instructions at the time.

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WRITTEN SOURCE EVALUATION BOARD REPORT

A. Description of the Requirement

1. The Procurement

Provide a narrative description of the technical requirement being procured together with its scientific objectives. Explain any follow-on effort which has been programmed or for which program approval is planned to be requested. Describe relationship with other efforts in process or planned. Explain any particular technical complexities which had an important effect on the solicitation of sources or the evaluation of proposals. Include a table of contents in the Report.

2. Program Approval

Identify the program approval document which authorized the procurement, showing title and numerical identification, date approved, and title of approving official.

3. Funding

State the funding applicable to the effort as follows:

- (a) Estimated amount to be obligated in the initial contract.
- (b) Estimated amount to be added to the contract being evaluated for completion of effort.
- (c) Estimated cost of follow-on effort to be procured under separate contract, such as subsequent phases.

4. Procurement Approach

- (a) State the date that the applicable Procurement Plan was approved.
- (b) Discuss any special procurement considerations which applied to the procurement being evaluated, such as the use of phased procurements.
- (c) Explain how the use of the type of contract (CPFF, CPIF, FFP, FPI) contemplated will advance NASA objectives; give reasons and rationale for the selection of contract type, including the applicability or non-applicability of the various

incentive concepts (award fee, cost, performance, schedule, and multiple.)

B. Roster and Chronology

1. Board Roster

Include the Board designation letter and any changes to it. As a supplement, provide the names, functional titles, and organizational assignments of the Chairmen of any committees and panels used by the Board.

2. Chronology

Provide a chronology of major events connected with the source evaluation, such as:

- (a) Date or dates preliminary criteria, criteria definitions, source list, and RFP were received by the Board.
- (b) Date or dates the Board and management approved the final criteria, criteria definitions, weights, source list and RFP.
- (c) Date RFP was mailed.
- (d) Date and place of preproposal conference.
- (e) Closing date for original proposal submission as well as closing date for any revised proposals.
- (f) Date proposal evaluation by Board began.
- (g) Date or dates and place of discussions with offerors.
- (h) Date or dates and disposition of any late proposals or revisions received.
- (i) Date or dates of customer experience checks made by the Board.
- (j) Date Board completed its Findings.
- (k) Date of presentation to the Program Director.

3. Sources

Provide a composite list, in alphabetical order, of sources solicited and sources submitting proposals by

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company name and address. The list should be footnoted to explain any code used.

C. Evaluation and Board Findings

1. Criteria and Weights

- (a) Qualification Criteria. State the specific qualification criteria included in the RFP and explain why each was necessary.
- (b) Evaluation Factors and Criteria. State the initial classifications of evaluation factors used in the evaluation. State the Mission Suitability evaluation criteria, their definitions, and the weights assigned to each. Explain the rationale for the proportionate weights assigned to each evaluation criterion. Set forth relevant excerpts from the RFP which describe the evaluation criteria and their relative weights.
- (c) Include excerpts from the RFP dealing with Cost and Other Factors.

2. Evaluation Process

- (a) Discuss assignments made to committees and panels. Identify the criteria or factors assigned for review, the general scoring method used, and the rationale for assignment. Include any particularly important committee report necessary to understand the Board results.
- (b) Discuss the scoring methods and techniques used by the Board.
- (c) Provide a summary of the primary points covered in the written and oral discussions and show the effect of the discussions on the evaluation of proposals. This summary should also contain general information about written questions submitted to the offerors, the amount of time spent in oral discussions, and the revisions in proposals, if any, resulting from the discussions. It should also take note of the common cutoff date established for completion of negotiations and submission of revised proposals, and the compliance of the offerors with that cutoff date.

- (d) Include an exposition of the proceedings of the Board that is sufficient to verify proper procedures were followed and sufficient to bring out any procedural irregularities that might exist. Procedural problem areas, if any, are to be covered specifically.
- (e) Describe steps taken and results obtained in verifying the proposer's capabilities; e.g., plant visits, customer checks, audit reports, etc.

3. Findings

- (a) Summary Schedules. Provide the following schedules:
 - (i) A single schedule listing all proposals in order of scores received for mission suitability factors and showing final score. Each proposal should also be classified with an overall adjective rating, such as "above average" or "acceptable", etc., as appropriate which indicates the Board's composite appraisal of mission suitability.
 - (ii) Provide final summary charts of what the Board considers to be the significant discriminators among proposals, including a comparative total evaluation. A summary of results of the analysis of cost factors should be included in this summary comparative analysis and other factors having significance in the Board's view should be mentioned.
- (b) Statement of Findings. Discuss each acceptable proposal in descending order of mission suitability scores awarded under major headings such as "above average" and "acceptable". In such a discussion, include each proposer's estimated cost (or price) presented in a traditional breakdown (labor, overhead, materials, fee, etc.), and provide the SEB's analysis and evaluation of the adequacy, realism, and significance of each cost proposal. Include a discussion of the following considerations, as appropriate:
 - (1) An assessment of the "Cost of Doing Business".
 - (2) A discussion of the technical or management effects of the cost as proposed.

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- (3) A best estimate of probable costs of performance for each proposer, if selected, together with an indication of confidence in such SEB's estimate.
- (4) Any significant changes in each proposal that would have to be negotiated after selection with a discussion of the negotiation cost objectives.
- (5) Any other information or analysis that would be helpful to the Source Selection Official in his determination of the relative importance of costs in making his selection decision.
- (6) Evaluation criteria weights and scoring in sufficient detail to permit examination of the results of each evaluation phase and a tracing of discriminators to the final results.
- (7) A comparative analysis of key personnel for competing firms. If "key personnel" criterion is included under a broader one, e.g., "staffing", it should be treated explicitly, including the weights specifically assigned to it. The differences in scores should be explained.
- (8) Criteria - Elements: Identify the elements or factors being evaluated under each criterion, whether or not such elements carry individual numerical weightings. Also identify the extent to which any criteria elements overlap or are treated more than once.
- (9) Traceability of Scoring: Where changes in scoring or evaluation of criteria have occurred during the process, a logical visible thread of the rationale for such changes in scoring or comparative evaluation should be provided.
- (10) Provide a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal with an estimate of the potential for correction of the significant weaknesses identified. Also, state the Board's estimate of the approximate impact on cost or price that would result from the elimination of correctible weaknesses during negotiations after selection.

- (11) Provide information to reflect the proposers financial capabilities as needed to perform the contract effort. The following is an illustrative listing of the types of information that may be included:
 - a. Complete name and location of the organizational element proposing the effort.
 - b. Complete name and location of the parent corporation, if any.
 - c. Place or places of performance of the proposed effort.
 - d. Recent history of sales (of the particular division or entity involved), by customer, including industry and Government customers.
 - e. Sales projections, by customer, for the period involved in the procurement.
 - f. Recent history of earnings of the division or entity involved in the procurement, if available.
- (12) Provide any information on the past corporate performance of each offeror that may be helpful to the Source Selection Official.
- (13) Present a brief analysis of the incentive arrangements proposed, how the rewards would be earned or penalties incurred, the benefits offered to NASA, and any changes to be sought in negotiations (such as, target minimum or maximum fee levels, sharing formula, ceilings, or relative incentive weights) which will improve the coverage of the incentive toward the attainment of the NASA procurement objectives.
- (14) Competitive Range: When proposers are eliminated from the competitive range at any point in the SEB process, there shall be presented to the Source Selection Official, the basis for elimination.
- (15) List all unacceptable proposals under the

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major heading "Unacceptable" and set forth the deficiencies which resulted in such a classification.

- (16) **Handling of Proposals:** Include the method used by the SEB in establishing cutoff dates for initial proposals and revisions. Note any anomalies or complaints received from competing companies.

ORAL PRESENTATION

The Chairman of the Board is normally responsible for conducting the presentation to the Source Selection Official. It is his function to convey concisely and accurately the results of the deliberations of the Board so as to permit an informed and objective selection of the best source for the particular contract task.

As a general rule, the Board Chairman's oral presentation should not exceed 45 minutes. Use should be made of vu-graphs or flip charts to move the presentation. Copies of the visual aids are to accompany SEB Report forwarded to the Source Selection Official, to be available to those attending the oral presentation. Relevant "back-up" material is to be available at the presentation.

The main thrust of the oral presentations is to focus upon issues and problems and to highlight the reasonable alternative choices of the Source Selection Official. This presentation is not to exclude, however, explanation of qualification and evaluation criteria, the major strengths and weaknesses of competitors, conduct and outcome of written or oral discussions, and the final scoring. These aspects of the Report are central to its meaning, and, even at the price of some repetition for readers of the written Report, should be reviewed in the Oral Presentation.

The presentations shall clearly show such discriminations as there are among the offerors. This requires the presentation of scores in enough detail to provide adequate basis for the Source Selection Official to assess the validity of the judgments made by the Board. This detail shall extend at least to the level below the top broad categories of evaluation criteria for Mission Suitability.

A suggested progression of charts follows. Brevity and understandability are the key. Charts should highlight significant aspects of the comprehensive written Report. They should be discussion prompters. Sample charts are not included in this

Manual, since these tend to lead toward unnecessary or even inappropriate standardization. As appropriate, the Director of Procurement will, from time to time, disseminate sample charts illustrative of approaches or techniques of exceptional merit and usefulness.

(1) Identification of the Procurement

This chart or vu-graph should identify the installation, the nature of the services or hardware to be procured, some quantitative measure such as estimated cost of the procurement, and the kind of contractual arrangement planned. (Detailed objectives of the procurement should be avoided.)

(2) Background

This item is useful to identify any earlier phases of phased procurement or, as in the case of continuing support services, to identify the incumbent and any consolidations or proposed changes from the existing structure, etc.

(3) Summary of Findings

The summary chart should, as simply as possible, show the final mission suitability rankings, comparative costs and any clearly distinguishing attributes of the competitors. Any special problem or issue which will complicate and possibly effect the selection should be introduced here also (see paragraph "9" below).

(4) Potential Sources

The customary (and quickly reviewed) chart showing the number of firms solicited, the number evincing interest, e.g., those requesting the RFP and attending the pre-proposal conference, and the identification of bidders, is still a useful reminder. Small business participation can be identified here.

(5) Mission Suitability Criteria, Weighting, and Scoring

A listing of the criteria, weighting, and scoring used is an important element in any presentation of SEB findings. If the criteria and scoring system selected are reasonably straightforward, this review can be brief. However, the exact relationship among any criteria that seems to indicate a duplication should be explained.

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(6) Strengths and Weaknesses of Competitors

This chart or vu-graph can be among the most valuable presented and the need for its preparation could initially assist the Board Chairman in distilling the essence of the Board's findings. Certain guidelines should be followed in the preparation of this chart:

- (a) Only the major strengths and weaknesses of individual firms should be selected for presentation. The significance of strengths and weaknesses is lost when exhibited in long lists without distinction as to importance.
- (b) The strengths and weaknesses should be related to the evaluation factors and criteria.
- (c) Comparison of strengths and weaknesses among offerors should be as clear as charting techniques and limitations will permit.
- (d) For competitors within the competitive range, it is important to indicate the significance of a weakness. Is the weakness to be corrected through negotiation? If so, at what estimated cost?

(7) Final Mission Suitability Rankings

This chart is to show, as simply as the material will permit, the list of evaluation criteria, the maximum points achievable, and the scores of the firms in the competitive range.

(8) Final Cost Comparison

A companion piece to the final Mission Suitability Rankings, this chart summarizes the comparison of the costs of alternate selections. The comparison should be as true as possible; therefore, SEB adjustments to achieve comparability should be shown. Further, the presentation of this chart should include the measure of confidence held by the Board in the costs of the individual competitors, noting the reasons for low or high confidence, such as negotiated overhead ceilings, etc.

(9) Other Factors

List and discuss any Other Factors pertinent to the

selection decision, whether these were preestablished or arose during evaluation.

(10) Special Interest

This chart should include only information of special interest to the Source Selection Official that has not been covered elsewhere; e.g.,

- (i) The method used in establishing and handling cut-off dates for submission of initial and revised proposals (include a discussion of any problems caused by late proposals).
- (ii) General nature and scope of discussions with proposers and the nature and scope of significant matters in revised proposals.
- (iii) Procedural errors or other matters, if any, that may impinge on the selection.